

Is There Any Hope For Me?

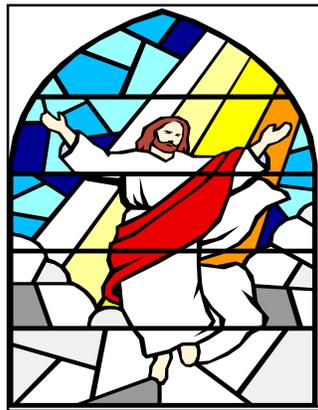
March/April 2010

Ann sat gazing at the stain glass window as she listened to the worship songs being sung. She noticed the varied colored pieces that had been carefully placed to form the intricate design. Her mind wandered to the hopes and dreams she had once carried inside now stomped on and broken by the person who was supposed to love her.

The court system had played havoc on her life adding to the abuse that had weighed her down. Contempt of court was only a laughable phrase that meant nothing to the abuser. Where was the justice?

The church that was supposed to be a safe place for the broken-hearted was ill equipped to handle her situation and others like hers. Just give grace was all she heard. Truth was not acknowledged and no accountability to the perpetrator was given.

Friends disappeared tired from hearing about the mess. Christians judged. The phone sat silent in its holder. No encouraging and supportive messages were left.



Although she had long left the destructive marriage behind, she sat noticing that every movement caused the shattered pieces to move and rewind. Life was a hard struggle financially and loneliness seemed to be her constant companion. Trust still remained an uncertainty.

Her emotional roller coaster kept her encircled in a journey she did not want to repeat. Progress in her personal growth came in baby steps that were sometimes hard to measure. She was free from the relationship but was she really free from what dwelt within, the persistent struggles. Will God transform the shattered pieces of her life into a masterful piece of art?

Like Ann most of us struggle with the effect of hardships life brings that has been buried deep within. We may or may not be aware of the churning inside for our body has become numb to the pain.

Sometimes we cover the struggles with outward addictions to people, food, drugs, alcohol, or things. These self-medicating coping skills keep us from addressing the issues that have permeated our life. The issues associated with the hurt and pain have mounted up like a pile of garbage that is toxic to our souls.

Not only do we hold onto them with every bit of strength we possess, but we remain in situations and relationships that are detrimental to our well-being. We don't realize that the splinter of hurt caused by the initial pain inflicted by others has penetrated deeper over time. The infection of our thoughts and feelings caused by the puss oozing from the wound spreads rapidly throughout our body.

Do we allow the wound to fester until it makes the whole body sick or possibly die? Are we willing to endure the pain to remove the splinter, cleanse the wound with antibiotics, and give up our coping mechanisms? Or do we just slap a band aid on and pretend it doesn't exist as our God given treasures are eaten away?

An important question arises to the surface. Are we being a good steward of the treasures God has created in each one of us, the treasures that make us unique?

Our treasures:

- Relationship with the Lord
- Soul and spirit
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Opinions
- Thoughts
- Values
- Talents
- Abilities
- Desires
- Dreams
- Personality

How we use and protect these treasures is our responsibility. Setting appropriate boundaries is necessary. Being consistent and giving consequences when they are violated is essential. Allowing others to come in and destroy our treasures is not good stewardship.

Ann's treasures had been shattered. She realized she had been



holding onto each little piece trying to figure out how to put them back together. As she looked up, her eyes were drawn to the cross. "Give Me your broken treasures," she distinctly heard.

Ann glanced back at the stained glass window. A rainbow of color shone through. A tear rolled down her cheek. She heard a soft whisper. "Ann, I have collected the pieces. They are in my hand. Be patient for I am creating a unique masterpiece so My glory will shine through the pieces of your life."

"I have caught every tear. I keep them close to Me. I know every heartache. Nothing is a waste. Hold on to Me. There is a purpose, My purpose, in all of your suffering. There is coming a time of rejoicing when everything will be revealed."

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 27:14 NIV

By Paula Silva

***Praise the Lord, O my soul;
all my inmost being,
praise His holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life
from the pit
and crowns you
with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires
with good things
so that your youth is renewed
like the eagle's.
The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all
the oppressed.***

Psalm 103:1-6 NIV

Editors note:

Everyday FOCUS Ministries hears horrific and heart wrenching stories like Ann's. They come from women, families, and friends who are seeking direction from God and wanting to know where He is.

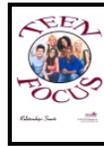
It takes a great deal of courage to begin to share the secret of abuse. It is crucial that the hearers be affirming and supportive making sure the victim is safe. Walking this journey with someone can be frustrating and tiresome.

Be: **Compassionate**
Comforting
Caring



Behind the faces of domestic violence, there is buried a hidden treasure, the priceless jewels of God's creation. Uncovering and restoring that hidden treasure brings hope and healing.

Partner with FOCUS Ministries as we continue to provide a safe place for teens, women and families to find hope and healing in Jesus Christ. Reaching out to teens through our TEEN FOCUS curriculum proactively strives to break the generational effect of abuse.



Words That Heal

The Lord reigns forever;
 He has established His throne
 for judgment.
 He will judge the world
 in righteousness;
 He will govern the peoples
 with justice.
 The Lord is a refuge
 for the oppressed,
 A stronghold in times of trouble.
 Those who know your name
 will trust in you,
 For you, Lord have never forsaken
 those who seek you.

Psalm 9: 7-10 NIV

FOCUS Support Groups

- Conway, **AR**
Sundays 3 p.m.
- Brandon, **FL**
The second or third Saturday of each month
- Eustis, **FL**
Saturdays 10 a.m. to Noon.
- Bolingbrook, **IL**
Monday - 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Saturday - 2:00-3:30 p.m.
- Hazel Crest, **IL**
Third Saturday of each month
- Lyons, **IL**
Last Friday of every month
6:30-9 p.m.
- Naperville, **IL**
Second and Fourth Thursday of every month 7 p.m.
- Wood Dale, **IL**
Second Thursday at 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.
- Hartville, **OH**
The second and fourth Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

- Lynnwood, **WA**
Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.

If you are interested in information about a particular support group or would like to start a support group in your area, contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023 or paula@focusministries1.org.



Healing From PTSD—The “Eyes” Have It

Hope and healing from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), resulting from domestic violence, are possible.

Recognizing that PTSD sufferers have had a history of multiple or repeated exposure to trauma/violence is an important first step. A person who develops PTSD feels helpless and unable to protect him or herself from perceived danger. Research has now shown when an individual is extremely upset/traumatized their brain cannot process information as it does ordinarily. A moment becomes “frozen in time” and remembering the trauma/violence may feel as bad as the original incident(s) because the images, sounds, smells, and feelings haven’t changed.

A relatively new method of treatment, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), seems to have a direct effect on the way that the brain processes information. According to the EMDR Institute, ‘this process integrates elements of many psychotherapeutic techniques designed to maximize the effects of the treatments, including cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, experiential, psychodynamic and body-centered therapies. EMDR is an information processing therapy and uses an eight-phase approach.’

The first phase is a history taking session during which the therapist assesses the client’s readiness for EMDR and develops a treatment plan. Together, client and therapist identify possible targets for EMDR processing including prior or recent distressing events, current situations

producing emotional disturbances and the development of specific skills and behaviors needed by the client in future situations.

During the second phase, the therapist ensures that the client has adequate methods of handling emotional distress and good coping skills and is in a relatively stable state. The client is then able to use these stress reducing techniques whenever necessary, during or between sessions.

In phases three through six, the client identifies the most vivid visual image related to the memory as possible, and a negative belief about self, related emotions, and body sensations. The client also identifies a preferred positive belief. The therapist then has the client rate the validity of the positive belief from one to ten as well as the intensity of the negative emotions.

Following this, the client is instructed to focus on the image, negative thought and body sensations while simultaneously moving his or her eyes back and forth following the therapist’s finger as it moves across his or her field of vision for 20-30 seconds or more. Although eye movements are the most commonly used external stimuli, therapists often also use auditory tones, tapping or other types of tactile stimulation. The therapist instructs the client to let his or her mind go blank and to notice whatever thought, feeling, image, memory or sensation comes to mind. This is repeated numerous times throughout the session. If the client

becomes distressed or has difficulty with the process, the therapist follows the established procedures to help the client resume processing. When the client reports no distress related to the targeted memory, the therapist asks him or her to think of the preferred positive belief and to focus on the incident while simultaneously engaging in eye movements. After several sets, clients generally report increased confidence in their positive belief. When asked to rate the negatives and positives as earlier, the positives typically show a vast improvement over the negatives.

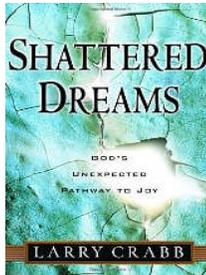
Phase seven involves the therapist asking the client to keep a journal during the week to document anything related that may arise; as well as reminding the client of the self-calming activities that were acquired in phase two.

In closing, phase eight begins with a re-evaluation of the previous work and any progress since the last session. After EMDR processing, clients generally report that the emotional distress related to the memory has been eliminated, or greatly decreased. They will still remember what happened, but the person no longer relives the images, sounds and feelings when the memory comes to mind. Normal processing of information is resumed, which is the ultimate goal of EMDR processing.

For more information about EMDR and finding a therapist, go to www.emdr.com.

By *Lynette Gatti*

Book Review



Shattered Dreams by Larry Crabb



“God is always working to make His children aware of a dream that remains alive beneath the rubble of every shattered dream, a new dream that when realized will release a new song, sung with tears, till God wipes them away and we sing with nothing but joy in our hearts.”

Discovering the all knowing God in the midst of pain and disappointment provides growth in our journey. God does care about each shattered piece of our lives. Although we may only see our messy situation, deeper within our soul lies the ultimate dream God has for each one of us.

Author, Editor and Publisher: Paula Silva

Copyright © 2010 FOCUS Ministries, Inc.. All Rights Reserved

**The mission of FOCUS Newsletter
is to encourage women
who are struggling in difficult circumstances
to find strength and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Funding: FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit organization. This ministry is funded by contributions and grants. **If you would like to help us minister to hurting women through the distribution of printed materials, support groups, workshops, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 2014, Elmhurst, IL 60126.** A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for all contributions.

FOCUS Ministries (and all individuals affiliated therewith) disclaims any personal liability for information presented within this newsletter or in seminars, workshops, and support group meetings. You should always consult a professional for medical, psychological, legal, financial, or biblical advice.

FOCUS Ministries Domestic Violence Training for Churches/Groups/Organizations

Topics:

- What is Domestic Violence?—A Closer Look at Verbal, Emotional, Sexual, Physical, and Spiritual Abuse
- Characteristics of an Abuser/Why Does He Do That?
- Recognizing a Victim of Domestic Violence
- Why Women Stay or Leave/Developing a Safety Plan
- How Does Domestic Violence Affect the Family Especially Children
- Teen Dating Violence
- What Can the Church Do?
- Do's and Don'ts of Counseling
- Signs that the Abuser Has Changed
- Church Safety Plan/Risks
- Becoming an Anchor in the Storm/How to Help Someone in an Abusive Relationship

Development of Domestic Violence Program in Churches

- Do's and Don'ts of Counseling Victims and Abusers
- Development of Domestic Violence Policies and Procedures for Churches
- Step By Step Approach for Churches to Address the Issue of Domestic Violence
- Training for support group leaders

Other Topics:

- Behind Closed Doors: Hope for Women in Difficult Relationships
- Unmasking Relationships
- What Color is Your Elephant?
- Shhhh...Don't Tell

When Time Doesn't Heal All Wounds – Life's Healing Choices

“Time heals all wounds” is one of the most frequently repeated phrases in times of suffering. While this familiar saying may apply to affairs of the heart, it does not apply to healing the wounds of domestic violence.

Sadly, it is possible to leave an abusive relationship but never find spiritual and emotional healing. The wounds caused by physical, emotional, and sexual abuse run deep; and while God does heal, the journey to wholeness requires our active participation.

Here are three choices you can make that will put you on the path to healing and restoration in Christ:

Choose to Connect

To heal the deep wounds of abuse, we must connect — with God and others. Start by surrendering all of your life to God. Hold nothing back. Nurture that connection with God through prayer, Bible reading, worship, and commitment to a local body of believers.

Then, reach out to one or two mature believers and schedule a convenient time to talk. Share as much of your story as you comfortably can, asking for their support.

Even a casual reading of Scripture makes it clear that God has something to say about connecting with others.

Let's look to God's Word:

Romans 12:15 instructs us to weep with each other, even though many of us prefer to weep alone.

James 5:16 invites us to share our

failings with others, so we can experience healing.

1 Corinthians 12:26 reminds us we are one body in Christ, and if one member suffers, all the members suffer.

When we choose healing connections over isolation, we are moving forward in our healing journey.

Choose to See Yourself through God's Eyes

Abuse steals your identity, shatters your dreams, and robs you of your future. It sucks the life out of you and fills your mind with lies and negative images about yourself.

Allow God to introduce you to the person He created you to be. Scour God's Word for the truth about your identity in Christ. Embrace the promise of His Word, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

Neil Anderson's book, *Victory over the Darkness*, does a good job of helping readers recognize the truth of their identity in Christ. Consider this and other supplemental materials as well.

But don't stop there. Identify and embrace your God-given personality; it's an indicator of your purpose and life's calling. Are you an introvert or extravert? Do you gravitate toward concepts or logic?

Plan to devote sufficient time to discovering your identity in Christ and your God-given personality, abilities, and gifts. Many churches offer free classes and assessments to help you with the process.

Over time, you will begin to see

yourself as the precious, chosen child of God you are.

Choose to Share Your Story

God has something to say to others through your life story. As you find healing and wholeness in Christ, share your story and God's healing comfort with others:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

Few in the body of Christ are willing—or able—to tackle the difficult issue of abuse recovery. However, as someone who has overcome abuse and found hope and wholeness in Christ, you have valuable insights that others need to heal. As you reach out to help others, you'll experience God's healing power in your own life as well.

Time will never heal the deep wounds of abuse, but God will. Reach out to Him today to begin your journey to wholeness.

By Mary J. Yerkes



Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

Urgent Needs:

- **Wal-Mart gift cards** to meet the physical needs of women and children
- **New board members** that share the vision of FOCUS Ministries
- **Part time** professional grant writer and fundraiser
- **Part time** administrative assistant.
- An **office space** to accommodate the increasing need for the ministry

Praises:

- **New support group** in

Hazel Crest, IL

- **Churches** that are just beginning to understand the dynamics of domestic violence
- **Women** who are coming to the support groups who are growing, learning, and making the necessary changes

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for a facility for our FOCUS Women's Center. It would enable us to expand our services and provide more trainings, seminars, and conferences.

- Pray for funds to be able to hire Brenda Spivey as vice president of FOCUS Ministries..
- Pray for board members to serve on the FOCUS board
- Pray for woman and families who contact our FOCUS Women's Center. We have had to turn away women who have come to us with physical needs because of the lack of funds.
- Pray for pastors' wives that are being abused.
- Pray for individuals,

churches, and businesses to commit to **monthly giving**.

- Pray for all the **FOCUS support group leaders** in the U.S
- Pray for **houses** in IL, to be donated for use as transitional homes.
- Pray for more **invitations** from churches to train pastors, staff, and congregations about domestic violence.



Upcoming Events

- **Feb. 28 & March 7, 2010**— The Other ProLife Movement at Evangel Baptist Church, Wheaton, IL
- **March 6, 2010**—Presentation at Wheaton Christian Center, Wheaton, IL
- **March 12, 2010**—Chuch Insider Talk Radio
- **April 16 & 17, 2010** —**Train the Trainer** (training for support group leaders), Oakbrook Terrace, IL
- **April 26, 2010** —DV Presentation by Brenda Spivey, Midwestern University, Downers Grove, IL

If you would like the FOCUS team to come to your church for a women's retreat ("A Woman's Journey To God"), seminar on domestic violence, or other speaking engagement, **contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023 or contactus@focusministries1.org**

A Woman's Journey to God Retreat

Divine Romance

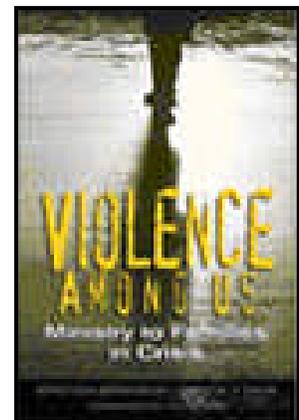
As you explore the story of your life, you'll get a glimpse of God's heart and the great romance He initiated before the dawn of time.

Redemption

Every person's story is pierced by wounds with powerful messages like "You'll never be good enough." From the pain of every day living to attacks from the enemy who fears who you are and what you might become, each person struggles to find truth, hope, and redemption.

Release

If lies, fear, and doubt did not stalk and paralyze your heart, what kind of woman would you be? What does God think of you? See yourself through God's eyes and learn how to celebrate and release the woman God had in mind when He made you!



Paula Silva, Coauthor

FOCUS DVD Promo -Safe Place

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGalZ8aBIMA>



P.O. Box 2014
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Phone: 630-595-7023
www.focusministries1.org

Endorsements:

"The church has long been blind to a serious problem and has missed many opportunities to minister to women who are being oppressed, battered, and emotionally abused through the misuse of power and scripture within the covenant of marriage. Focus Ministries seeks to remedy this through education, counseling, practical resources, small groups, and emotional support. Focus Ministries provide a godly lifeline to those who have lost all hope. The church needs Focus Ministries to help them learn how to wisely help these troubled families. I enthusiastically recommend their ministry."

**Leslie Vernick LCSW, Christian counselor, speaker,
author of *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship: Seeing It! Stopping It! Surviving It!***

"These women are called, prepared, and surrendered to their crucial ministry. The stamp of God is on their lives and work. It's my prayer that God will use their gifts across the world to draw thousands of women to the hope that Christ provides. This is one ministry I'm sold on."

Dr. Larry Crabb, New Way Ministries

"I commend FOCUS Ministries for helping the church in its battle against domestic abuse. After seeing the response to a message I preached on this topic, I've come to realize that domestic abuse is much more common in our churches than we would like to admit. The materials and interaction I've had with FOCUS Ministries was helpful and very much needed. I pray that God will use FOCUS to awaken all of us to the reality of abuse as well as bring hope and healing to the victims."

**Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer
Senior Pastor, The Moody Church, Chicago, IL**



Ways You Can Help FOCUS Ministries

- ★ Make GoodSearch your search engine for the internet. Choose FOCUS Ministries as the ministry you support. FOCUS Ministries receives a penny for every search you do. It does not cost you anything.
- ★ When purchasing anything from Amazon.com, go to our website first, www.focusministries1.org, click on the Amazon.com icon, and Amazon will donate a small percentage of your purchased amount. This does not cost you anything.
- ★ Please Choose FOCUS as your favorite charity at iGive.com. You can help FOCUS Ministries when you make online purchases! For more information, please see: [Help FOCUS at iGive.com](http://www.focusministries1.org) on our website, www.focusministries1.org.
- ★ You can help FOCUS Ministries when you make online purchases! For more information, please see: [Help FOCUS at iGive.com](http://www.focusministries1.org)

O Lord, You Alone Are My Hope! Psalm 71:5 NLT